TED talk: Why Eye witnesses Get It Wrong

Scott Fraser

May 2012

3. Cognitive processes are influenced by social and cultural factors.

The presenter, Scott Fraser, talks about a murder case he worked on, and the un-reliability of eyewitness in the case. The suspect in the case was sentenced a life imprisonment, with only teenagers’ eyewitnesses to hold evidence against him. Scott Fraser, however, decided to go deeper into the case, and proved that eyewitness doesn’t hold enough evidence to go against the suspect. He shows that false memory can be created, because people tend to fill in information from what they already know, and that ‘memory is a product of what we originally experienced and everything that’s happened afterwards.’ Scott Fraser recreated the scene of murder from what was told from the eyewitness testimony, and showed the judge that the face of the victim were not visible, therefore proved that the eyewitness testimony cannot be relied on. The talk concluded with the fact that ‘the brain abhors a vacuum’, therefore creating false memories, so that even close-up eyewitness to a crime can be totally unreliable.

TED talk: The riddle of experience vs. memory

Daniel Kahneman

Febuary 2012

Evaluate one theory of how emotion may affect one cognitive process. With reference to relevant research studies, to what extent is cognitive process reliable.

Daniel Kahnmean states that humans are made up of two selves; one is the experiencing self, which experiences and lives in the present, and one is the remembering self, which maintains the story of peoples’ lives. He relates this to talking with a doctor- If the doctor asks, ‘what do you feel now’, that has to do with the experiencing self, and if the doctor asks, ‘How have you been feeling lately’, that has to do with the remembering self. He also talks about an experience of listening to music. He states that it was beautiful music for twenty minutes, but the experience was ‘dreadful’, because at the end, there was a loud screeching sound. Daniel Kahnerman states that the experiencing self chooses what is to be remembered, and because the loud screeching sound is remembered, the remembering self rethinks the event as dreadful. This shows how emotions affect cognitive process; because of the emotion of the loud screeching sound, the cognitive process in making the experience into a long-term memory was changed, therefore changing the memory from a happy one to a dreadful one.